

REMARKS

Applicant's attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given this case and especially for the telephone and e-mail exchanges, culminating in the agreement reached on December 9, 2004.

Summary of Claims

Claims 2-12 and 15-25 are currently pending in this application.

Claims 13, 15, 24 and 25 have been amended in accordance with the agreement reached with the Examiner. After entry of this amendment, the independent claims are Claims 15, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

Claims 22 & 23 were previously allowed.

In light of the amendments and remarks herein and the agreements reached with the Examiner during the telephonic discussions and e-mail exchanges, and the additional remarks being provided herewith, it is believed that all currently pending claims not previously allowed, are now allowable. Reconsideration of the rejections and early confirmation of the allowability of all claims are respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. 112

In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, Claim 13 has been amended to depend from Claim 25 and thus overcomes the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112.

Non-Obviousness

In accordance with the Examiner's suggestions, Claims 15, 24 and 25 have been amended and thus overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

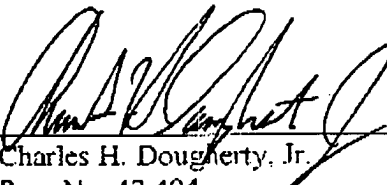
Since Claim 15 has been amended as noted above, no amendments are required to Claim 21.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that the remaining issues have been fully addressed, and the present application is now in condition for final allowance. Accordingly, early notice to such effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner or his SPE wish to discuss any aspect of this response, they are encouraged to contact Applicant's attorney at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: December 15, 2004

By


Charles H. Dougherty, Jr.
Reg. No. 42,494

REED SMITH LLP
P.O. Box 488
Pittsburgh, PA 15230-0488
(412) 288-7229

Attorney for Applicant